United Nations A/60/781

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 April 2006

Original: English

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 112 (e)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 5 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to inform the latter that the Government of the People's Republic of China has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations at its first election to be held during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly on 9 May 2006 in New York.

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, with reference to its candidature to the Human Rights Council, has the honour to present an aide-memoire containing the pledges and commitments of the Government of the People's Republic of China to the protection and promotion of human rights (see annex).

The Chinese Government has all along been committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and has taken an active part in international human rights dialogues and cooperation. The Chinese Government supports the Human Rights Council to handle human rights issues with impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, and to enhance constructive dialogues and cooperation among civilizations, cultures and religions. The Chinese Government is convinced that its election will be conducive to the noble cause of the Human Rights Council in promoting and protecting human rights around the world.

06-31668 (E) 280406

Annex to the note verbale dated 5 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

Aide-memoire

1. The Chinese Government has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations at the elections to be held during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly on 9 May 2006 in New York.

2. The Chinese Government is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Chinese people. Since reform and opening-up started 28 years ago, it has made strenuous efforts in promoting social progress in all fields. The Chinese people have made a historic leap from having adequate food and clothing to moderate prosperity. Two hundred and fifty million people have been lifted above the poverty line. Remarkable achievements have been made in the areas of education, culture, health care, science and technology. The National People's Congress has adopted nearly 300 laws and regulations related to the protection of civil and political rights, ensuring complete freedom of the Chinese people in movement, employment, access to information, religious belief and ways of life.

3. China is a developing country with a big population. Much work remains to be done in the field of human rights. In 2004, the statement that "The State respects and safeguards human rights" was written into the Constitution by the National People's Congress, defining the position of human rights in the overall national development strategy. Following this constitutional principle, the Chinese Government is consistently pursuing the scientific outlook on comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development that is people-centred, steadily advancing judicial reform, and constantly improving democracy and the legal system, with a view to building a harmonious society featuring social justice and overall human development. At the fourth session of the tenth National People's Congress in March 2006, the eleventh Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development was adopted. The Plan puts forward the ambitious goal of building a new socialist countryside. It puts emphasis on effectively protecting the rights and interests of farmers, the overwhelming majority of the whole population, and improving their well-being, so that the entire population can equally share the benefits of reform and development.

4. The Chinese Government respects the universality of human rights and supports the United Nations in playing an important role in the protection and promotion of human rights. China has acceded to 22 international human rights instruments, including five of the seven core conventions: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Chinese Government has earnestly fulfilled its obligations and regularly submits reports on implementation. Having signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, China is now in the process of amending its criminal, civil and administrative procedure laws and deepening judicial reform to create conditions for ratification at an early date.

5. The Chinese Government actively cooperates with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the special mechanisms of the Human Rights Commission. At its invitation, Ms. Mary Robinson, the former High Commissioner, paid seven visits to China. In August 2005, the incumbent High Commissioner, Ms. Louise Arbour, visited China. During the visit, the memorandum of understanding on the Mutual Agreement to Cooperate in the Development and Implementation of Technical Cooperation Programmes was signed between China and the Office, identifying the priorities of cooperation for the next three years. This is the third cooperation agreement between the two sides since 2000. In recent years, the Chinese Government has invited to China the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The Chinese Government has given responses in a highly responsible manner to the communications from all the special procedures of the Human Rights Commission as well as those transmitted through 1503 procedure.

6. The Chinese Government holds that owing to differences in social systems, level of development, religions and cultural background as well as historical tradition, it is natural for countries to differ on human rights issues. China has all along advocated dialogues and exchanges between countries based on equality and mutual respect, which will enable them to enhance mutual understanding, broaden consensus, learn from each other and make progress together. China often conducts human rights exchanges and cooperation of various forms with other developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Human rights dialogues and consultations have also been held between China and the European Union, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, the United States, Australia and Hungary, etc. China is extensively engaged in human rights dialogues and exchanges within regional, subregional and interregional cooperation frameworks. It has hosted the eighth and thirteenth Workshop of the Framework on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region and two ASEM informal human rights seminars.

7. The Chinese Government took an active part in the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 and the Durban World Conference against Racism in 2001, as well as the Human Rights Commission over the past decades, and has made its contributions to the formulation of international human rights instruments, the fight against apartheid, and the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights as well as the right to development. China supports the establishment of the Human Rights Council and has played a constructive role in the consultation of the relevant General Assembly resolution. The Chinese Government holds that the Human Rights Council should respect the historical, cultural and religious backgrounds of different countries and regions, and promote dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions; and attach equal importance to civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other. The Council should ensure impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues, and the elimination of double standards and politicization, thus avoiding the mistake of political confrontation made by the Human Rights Commission. China stands ready to take an active part in the future work of the Council and work together with all other members to achieve the above goals.